

SUBTERRANEA BRITANNICA

Bulletin No. 3.

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EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:

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Elaine Blatchford - Assistant Secretary, 21 Briary Lane, Royston, Herts. (Tel: Royston 43314) (Co-opted).
Daphne Duncar - Publicity Officer, 1 Hollies Close, Royston, Herts. (Tel: Royston 41066).

Elected Committee Members:

Alan Fleck, Cecil J. Bourne, Richard Maxwell-Comfort, Alan MacCormick, David Wallington, Christopher Montague - Young People's Representative.

Subterranea Britannica is in association with Société Française D'Étude des Souterrains of France, and Arbeitskreis für Erdstallforschung of Germany.

EDITORIAL

Attention must be drawn to our Chairman's remarks made at the Subterranea Britannica Day Conference in September, when he stressed the necessity for this body to collect information from different areas of Great Britain and to have a readily available index for reference on all types of subterranean structures.

The need for such material is great and contributions should be sent to Mrs. Sylvia Beamon, Publication Secretary, 16 Honeyway, Royston, Herts. SG8 7ES, no matter how small.

Nottingham has been the place chosen for this year's coach outing to view underground structures and has been arranged for Saturday, 8th May. Ideas for further summer visits would be very welcome. The successful September meeting was well attended and is reported below.

C. J. BOURNE
EDITOR.

NOTE It has been decided to call a delegate, and other interested members', meeting of all Societies concerned with underground structures in Great Britain in order to co-ordinate field methods and recording techniques and to explore the possibility of setting up a National Federation of interested Societies. This will be held at the INSTITUTE OF ARCHAEOLOGY, Gordon Square, London, W.C.1. on Saturday 23rd October, 1976. It is hoped that Professor Glyn Daniel will be in the chair. For further information or to enrol, write to: Mrs. S. Beamon.

REPORT OF SUBTERRANEA BRITANNICA DAY CONFERENCE - SATURDAY, 20TH SEPTEMBER, 1975.

Dr. John Alexander, the Chairman, opened the meeting which was held at the Lucy Cavendish College, Cambridge at 10.30 a.m. After formal business was completed the Chairman raised three matters:

1. The great need for a central body to draw together all the field groups collecting information from different areas of Great Britain, this is what should be the main function of the Society.
2. There is the need for improved recording techniques, also indexes of different kinds of structures of all ages and periods.
3. Since there is a great range of evidence from prehistoric times to the 17th - 19th centuries there should be a break-up into period considerations across the country, those interested in prehistoric underground structures with exchange of information, in fact we would be a private national service which like the C.B.A. and other bodies cannot.

The Treasurer's report was read by Mr. Cecil Bourne in the absence of Dr. J. Garrod, and approved.

The Royston Pilot Scheme report was read by its Chairman, Mr. R. Maxwell-Comfort who stated that more help was required from interested persons. He also brought up the fact that he felt more advertising locally should be done by perhaps producing a report of what had been done up to the present time.

We welcome new Committee Members Mr. Alan MacCormick (from Nottingham) and Mr. David Wallington. Both were elected to serve for the coming twelve months. The Treasurer, Dr. John Garrod offered his resignation, Mrs. Pam Goodey was shortly to move away from the district and would be unable to continue as General Secretary. Thanks to them for their work was recorded.

A proposal was made and accepted that a National Conference should be held in London or another part of the country with this Society as the host body, but to include the C.B.A., London Subterranean Survey Association and other societies interested in underground structures.

Mr. C. Bourne gave a short talk on some of the Scottish burial chambers he had recently seen illustrating his remarks with slides. (See pages

Mr. B. Hesketh gave a description of the Margate Shell Grotto which belongs to his family and had been discovered in 1835 filled with chalk rubble.

After lunch Mrs. K. de Brisay gave a brief talk on salt-mining and also the winning method used on the Essex Coast in Roman times.

Mr. T. Bridges from the Watford Underwater Club then showed a film and spoke on the excavation of the well and its refuge at Ashridge House near Berkhamstead, Herts. The film had previously been seen on the television programme 'Blue Peter'.

Mrs. D. Duncan brought up the subject of a shaft which had appeared at Baldock Street in Royston, Herts., possibly a well but is not shown on the Anglian Water Boards records. The structure is cut straight into the chalk and not brick-lined. Further investigation is needed.

FORMER AMMUNITION DUMP IN WILTSHIRE

A sequel to the letter from Mrs. Greta Maxwell-Comfort in Bulletin No. 1 regarding one of the largest and most unusual properties ever to come onto the market. A farming group has purchased the two huge underground ammunition dumps which have miles of tunnels, three miles of conveyor belts and enough space under ground to house 20 buildings the size of Centre Point in London.

The two dumps are at Eastleys, near Corsham in Wiltshire and at Monkton Farleigh near Bradford-on-Avon.

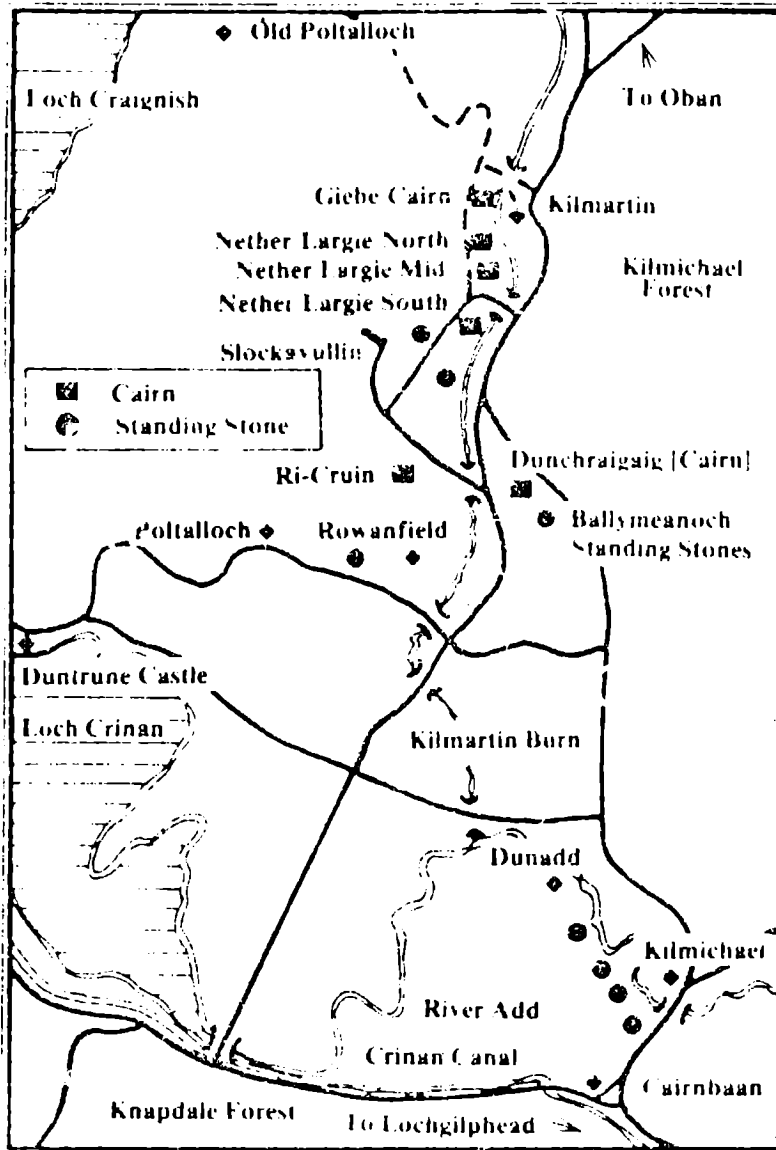
At one time the lines of passages formed part of a Bathstone quarry but in the late 1930's the Government took them over to store ammunition. Since 1967 the whole complex has been redundant.

It is still not known for what purpose the huge underground complex of two million square feet would be used.

THE CAIRNS OF KILMARTIN AND CLAVA - SCOTLAND

In a triangle of land with Kilmartin at its apex Crinan to the west and Cainbaan to the east lie a number of Neolithic and Bronze Age memorials to the dead. Kilmartin overlooks Loch Crinan near the west end of Glen More. At the eastern end of Glen More not far from Inverness lie another fine group of three cairns at Bulnuaran of Clava.

Of the Kilmartin group this summer I visited the Dunchraigaig Bronze Age cairns in a small copse (see map.) The cairn approximately 30 m. in diameter still stands 2.1 m. high. On the south side is a huge cap stone 4.3 m. x 2.5 m. x 0.37 m. thick resting on the boulder walls of a cist.



To the north lie three cairns. The Nether Largie South is the oldest cairn of the group being of Neolithic age and yielded in 1864, cremation burials in the segmented main chamber. The capstones of this chamber are very large.

The Nether Largie Mid cairn lies 450 m. towards Kilmartin and was excavated in 1929.

It is round, some 32 m. in diameter with a boulder kerb. Two cists were found one in the north west section and one on the south and both were empty. The former has side slabs which are carefully grooved to take the end slabs. This cairn is probably of early Bronze age date. (see illustration).

The Nether Largie North cairns (see illustration) lies 200 m. further north. It is 21 m. in diameter and stands at 2.7 m. high. It has a large empty central cist with a capstone, the underside of which is ornamented with cup marks and axe carvings.

The Glebe cairn is the most northerly of the group and is another round burial mound of the early Bronze Age, 33.5 m. in diameter. It has a central cist 2.3 m. long covered by a massive capstone 2.7 m. long, there is a secondary cist in the south west section.

The Ri Cruin cairn lies south south west of Nether Largie South. It is a round cairn containing three cists. All of these have grooved side slabs and one end slab in the south cist has carvings of bronze heads. Another upright slab on this cist now lost, had a carving of what seems to be a bronze halberd or a boat. (see illustrations)

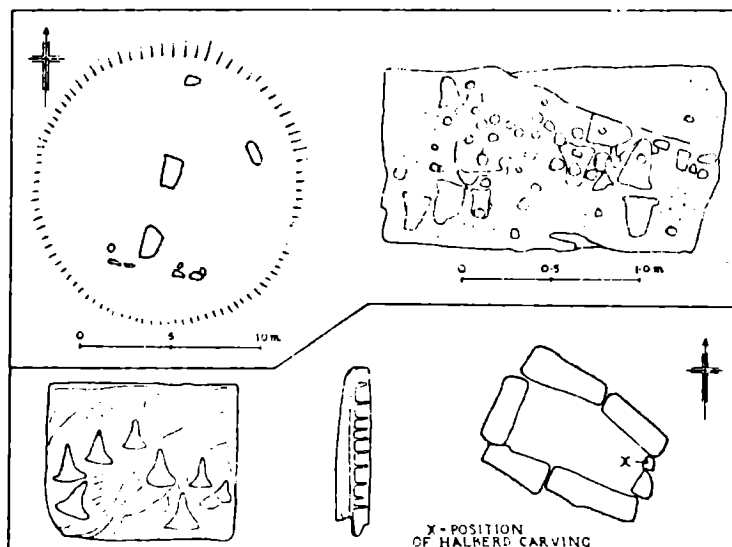


Fig. 21. (top) Plan of Nether Largie North cairn, Kilmartin, Argyllshire, showing the position of cists (scale 1:420) and axe carvings on the stone covering the central cist (scale 1:42).

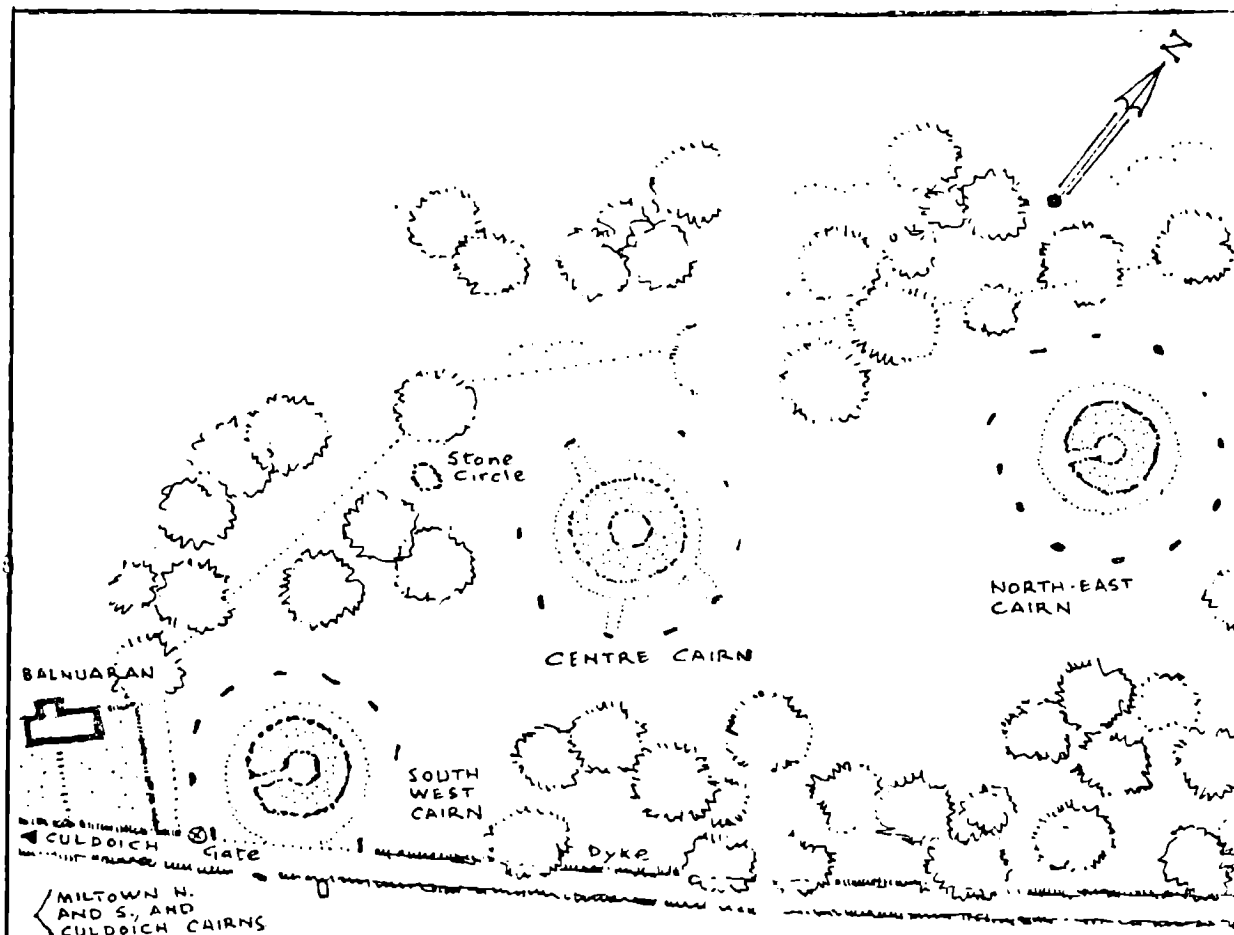
(bottom) Plan of the S cist in Ri Cruin cairn, Kilmartin, Argyllshire, with drawings of axe carvings on the end slab and of the upright slab with carvings of a halberd with streamers. Original position of this vanished stone is marked with an X. Scale 1:42.

The Clava cairns (see illustration) are three chambered cairns. The south west cairn is encountered first and the road runs through the surrounding stone circle. It has a passage grave bordered by a kerb of upright boulders 16 m. in diameter with an oval central chamber 3.5 m. x 4 m. The entrance passage faces south west and there are cup marks on the foundation stone of the chamber wall just to its left.

The centre cairn is a ring cairn with no passage to the chambers and is roughly the same size as the south west cairns. Nine standing stones surround it and lie on a 38 m. diameter circle. Three stones are connected with the cairn by low artificial causeways.

Map Showing Layout of The Clava Cairns - after EAM '70

Distance between the south west and the north east cairns 91 m.



The north east cairn is another passage grave but here the stone circle is egg shaped. The boulder kerb of the cairn is 16.8 m. in diameter and a stone on the north side is decorated with cup marks and one cup and ring. The enclosed chamber is 3.8 m. across and its walls overhang suggesting that it was roofed with a drystone corbelled dome.

It is very probable that all the cairns are of late Neolithic and Early Bronze Age date with the Neolithic passage graves of an earlier epoch and it is likely that both the Kilmartin group and Clava group are linked by the natural routeway of the Great Glen.

C. J. Bourne.

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Scotland - An Archaeological Guide - Evan W. Mackie.

The Clava Cairns - Edward Meldrum F.S.A.

The Chambered Tombs of Scotland, Vol. I & II - A. S. Henshall

EARLY SUMMER OUTING

A coach has been provisionally booked from the Cambridge area to Nottingham for SATURDAY, 8TH MAY, 1976. Please write and book a seat from Mr. C. Montague 62 Newmarket Road, Royston, Herts.

THE DUNGEON BENEATH THE BUTTER CROSS AT BUNGAY

During their annual holiday, two of our members, Mr. and Mrs. S. H. Rugless visited the small country town of Bungay in Suffolk and found out that an underground structure had existed beneath the Butter Cross. The Secretary wrote to the Curator of Bungay Museum and received the following reply.

"I was amazed to hear of your Society and am truly puzzled about the value of collecting such information. However, much to my surprise, I find I can answer your question..."

Further enquiries were made to the Suffolk County Library (Ipswich Reference Library) who have granted permission for the following information to be included in the Bulletin from Vol. III of the manuscripts compiled by Ethel Mann (who died in 1940) and mainly appear in her published work Clo Bungay.

'On the 1st May 1863, the steps into the Butter Cross Bungay on which the Cage or Lock-up (pulled down in 1836) formerly stood, were commenced being removed and the floor made level with that of the Market Place. Beneath the steps in the centre of the floor was found the dungeon; a small rectangular place measuring 6 ft. 4 ins. (1.92 m.) in diameter, its height being 5 ft. 1 in. (1.55 m.) The walls were built of stone and were of great tenacity faced with brick and very difficult to pick away. The floor of the dungeon was 14 ft. 10 ins. (4.29 m.) below the Cross Beams of the Dome frame of the Cross. On the outside of the main or inner walls and abutting on it was another wall of stone not so high, about 2 ft. (61 cm.) thick and beyond this second wall were several layers of rubble and brick. On removing some of the latter large lumps of charcoal, burnt charred wood and ashes were found, several of which I picked up⁺; doubtless remains of the former cross consumed at the great fire, on the 1st March 1688. A small copper piece of money, the doit of Chas. I was found at the same time.

Looking at these walls carefully, the⁺ conclusion arrived at by me was that they were built long before the erection of the present cross (1690) and had formed the walls of a dungeon of a much earlier date. The Caps or heads of the newel posts on the steps leading down to the dungeon (removed about 75 years since) are now to be seen nailed up within the dome of the Cross where they were placed by the late Town Clerk Mr. W. Dybale, when the prison was done away with. They are of oak and bear respectively the carved date of 16 and 90 (1690). The steps and platform on which the cage or lock-up formerly stood had long been the rendez-vous for the lazy, idle and disorderly, their removal was hailed with pleasure by the inhabitants.

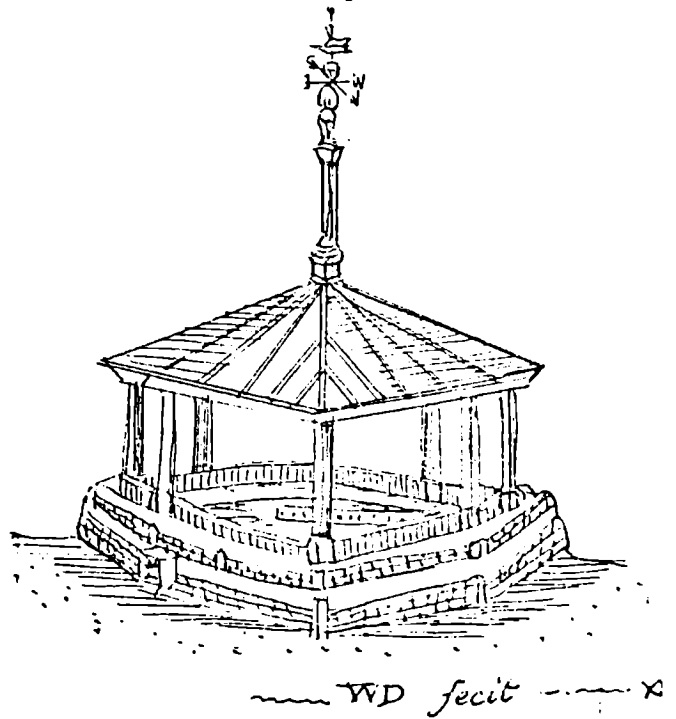
The Cross itself, sadly dilapidated, underwent considerable repair at the same time, and the decayed wooden plinths of the eight columns were replaced by stone - G. B. Baker 1863' (probably Graystone Bucke Baker 1801 - 1878 who was a Manager of a Bank and well-known as an archaeologist, although his brother shared the same initials. George Bucke Baker 1798 - 1883, was an auctioneer, land surveyor, and town clerk of Bungay).

Sylvia P. Beamon.

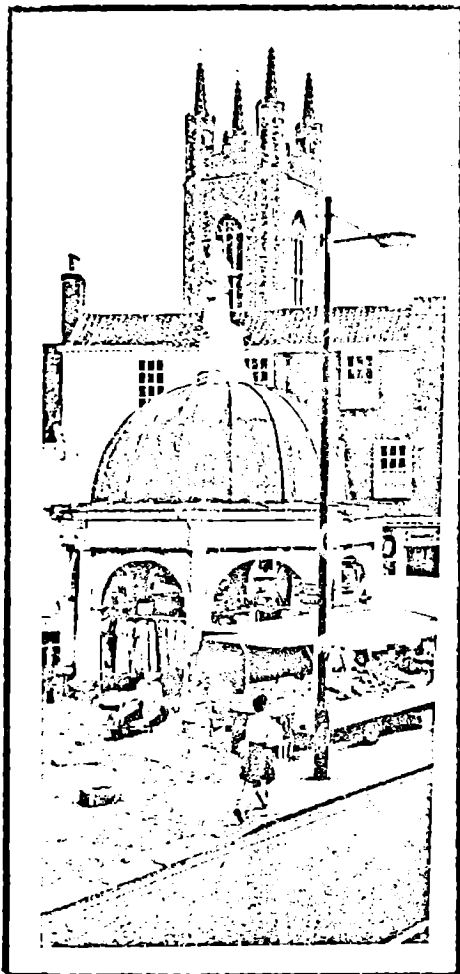
+ word indecipherable.

The Corn Cross

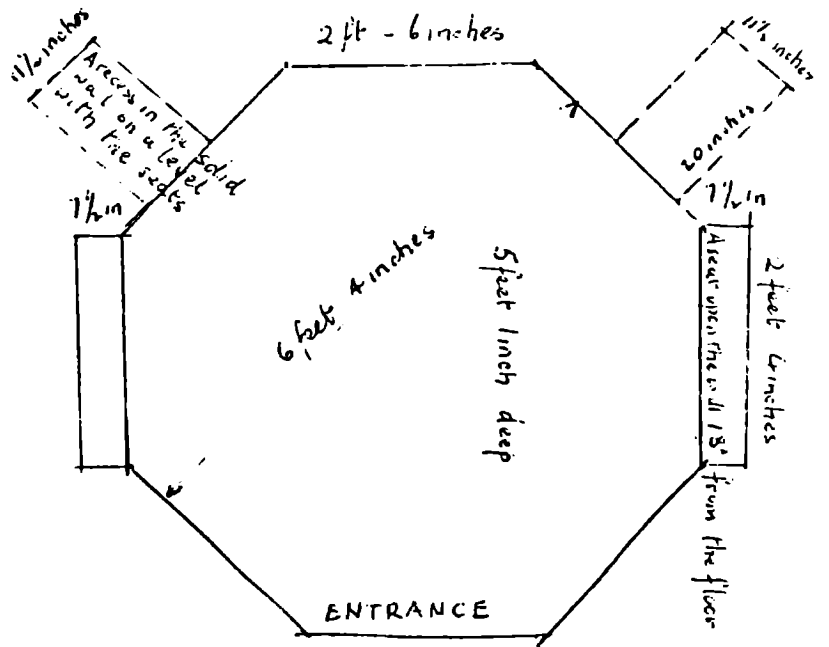
Note: Until 1810, the Market Place contained a Corn Cross in the centre as well as the existing Butter Cross. The Corn Cross was removed in 1810 and the materials sold.



Existing Butter Cross



Plan of the Dungeon
beneath the Butter Cross
Plan made May 1 1863



Scale 1/2" = 1'-0"

ROCK-DWELLINGS IN WORCESTERSHIRE AND STAFFORDSHIRE

Some of the most recently occupied cave dwellings in Western Europe, certainly in this country, are those which have been hewn out of red sandstone on the borders of north Worcestershire with Staffordshire. Many are now on private land and inaccessible without special permission; others seem to have disappeared under a jungle of brambles and undergrowth. There are, however, still several which are quite accessible to the public and have been occupied, in some cases, into the 1970's.

Probably the best-known is Holy Austin Rock, just below the northern point of Kinver Edge near Wolverley. This is a large knoll which has been hollowed out into a series of small chambers, most of them no larger than a cottage living-room. Many are linked by passages and stairs, for the caves are on several levels; there are signs of chimneys and large window spaces. On one side of the knoll are the remains of the brick houses which were built against the rock, with scooped-out rooms behind. Many of the old chambers are now blocked, possibly because the sandstone had become dangerous, but some were occupied as late as the 1950's and one was used as a cafe - the "Teas" sign can still be seen, fading on the face of the cliff.

There are several other rock-dwellings along Kinver Edge. About a mile south of Holy Austin is Nanny's Rock - less extensive, but still roomy with big 'picture' windows. The walls have been so carved with graffiti over the centuries that they appear to be heavily-weathered. At the southern end of Kinver Edge another cave, Vale's Rock, is now wired off and inaccessible.

More rock-dwellings can be found a mile or two south, in the village of Wolverley. Near the church is a house built partly from the rock on which it stands, and in the cliff near the centre of the village are several dug-outs where the labourers of a 19th century ironmaster were housed. Many of the rock-cottages of Wolverley were still inhabited at the turn of the century and considered 'infinitely superior' to the small houses of crowded cities. "Wherever a suitable rock was found, windows and doorways were hewn out, chimneys erected, kitchen, bedroom, store-room and stable were all excavated out of the heart of the red hill." Elsewhere, as at Holy Austin, cottages were built against the rock-face, with inner rooms scooped out of the soft sandstone. Most were dry, warm and comfortable; others, owing to the porous nature of the stone, were abandoned. The most picturesque group was at Blakeshall, a small hamlet near Wolverley. The last to be occupied, at nearby Drakelow, was vacated as late as 1974.

Many of these caves appear to have been occupied for centuries. The 'Devil's Spittleful', between Bewdley and Kidderminster, described as a 'conical mass' of sandstone 40 feet (12.19m) high, its length across the top from base to base 320 feet (97.54 m.) and its base circumference 871 feet (265.48 m.) had been abandoned by the end of the 19th century but still showed traces of habitation - a hearth and chimney, and traces of other chambers. It was not known whether the caves were natural or artificial but it seems likely that any natural hollows would have been easily enlarged, as at other places.

The largest of all the rock habitations is Redstone Hermitage at Arley Kings. This great red cliff stands beside the Severn, opposite Blackstone Road, and its face is honeycombed with doorways and windows. Leyamon, the 12th century priest and poet who wrote one of the earliest histories of Britain, is said to have lived in Redstone, but the caves are extensive and have obviously housed large communities. Bishop Latimer, writing in 1538, remarked that they could "lodge 500 men, as ready for thieves and traitors as true men". The grooves and hinge-marks of doors and shutters still remain.

There are, naturally, legends concerning all the caves. Holy Austin Rock was supposed to have been occupied by one of the first Christian missionaries to arrive in the Severn valley - possibly St. Augustine himself. Southstone Rock, at Stanford on Teme, once held a chapel dedicated to St. John, and another early hermit is said to have lived in Athelward's Rock near Bridgenorth in Shropshire, only a few miles away. The Devil's Spittleful (spadeful) was, of course, attributed to Old Nick himself.

The area in which these dwellings is found is much wooded and I suspect that there may be others, forgotten or hidden on private land.

Donna Baker.

Bibliography:

Victoria County History for the relevant Counties.

Historic Worcestershire, by W. Salt Brassington F.S.A. published 1894.

Article in Country Quest, published by Caxton Press, by Donna Baker, May 1975.

ANSTEY - THE CASTLE AND CAVE GATE (PART I)

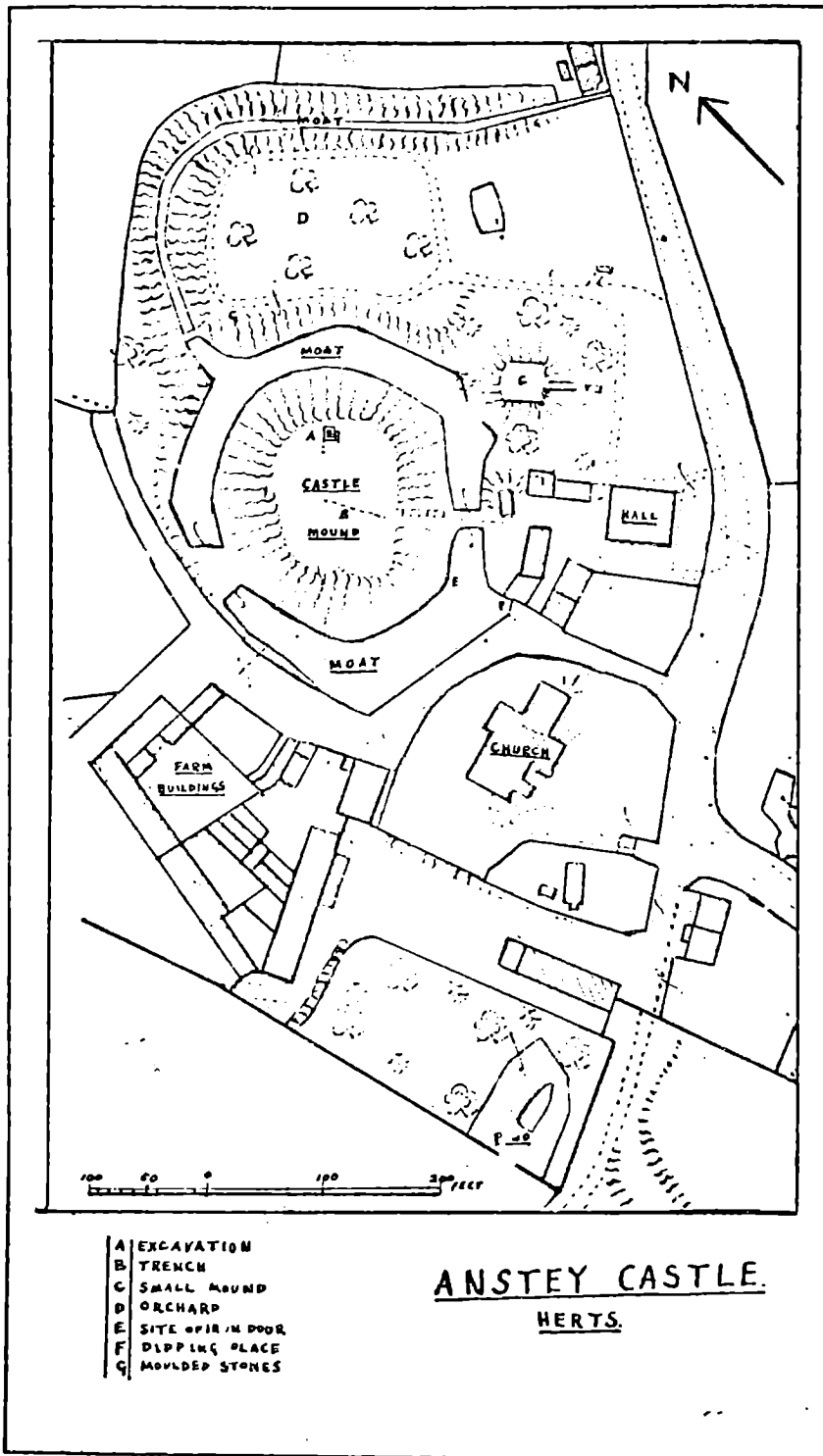
Anstey is a village near Buntingford in Hertfordshire, and local tradition maintains that a subterranean passage runs between the Castle mound and Cave Gate assumed to be the outlet, about which the legend of Blind George and his dog is still told.

The site of Anstey Castle is chiefly distinguished by a great flat-topped mound surrounded by a broad deep moat, except on the south-east and north-west, where there were bridges and entrances; east of this is a smaller mound, and to the north-east an orchard, which stands on a third mound, and is encompassed by a narrower moat, branching out from the first. It seems possible that these formidable earthworks were already in existence at the time of the Conquest and were adapted by Eustace of Boulogne, the reputed builder of the Castle, into whose hands the Manor of Anstey passed in 1066.

In October, 1902 excavations were made on the east side of the great mound by R. T. Andrews, and a rough-faced wall of flints was discovered not directly straight, but turning at an angle, fragments of Roman pottery, and worked and moulded stone, and some bones presumed to be human, were also met with.(1)

From his excavation Mr. Andrews realised that the mound is not formed by material from the moat. The mound itself has a top layer of ordinary soil about 6" (15 cm.) thick, then a foot (30 cm.) of boulder clay, then an irregular lay of flints then boulder clay again. The moat had been cut out of the natural soil of the district through the clay into the chalk. The whole of the hill tops of Anstey and the district are capped with the boulder clay, varying in thickness from a few centimetres to five, six or more feet (1.52 m. to 1.82 m.), then a layer of flint and then the chalk, although there are places where there are but a few centimetres of top soil and then the chalk.(2)

An old man Thomas Martin speaking in 1902, said that about 40 years before when the moat of the Castle was being cleared out during a very dry summer when the water was low he saw a pair of iron door in the mud of the moat just opposite the dipping place at E, and which spot was about 45 ft. (13.67 m.) west of the steps up the side of the mound. These doors were upright in the side of the bank about 5 ft. (1.52 m.) and from 4 - 5 ft. (1.22 m. - 1.52 m.) wide and appeared very thick. He cleaned them, they were hung on strong hinges, and had a heavy bar across them, and fastened he thought with a padlock. It was



said that 'the Government' refused the farmer's request to open them under any consideration (possibly the landlord interfered to avoid stirring up local superstition) however, Mr. Andrews thought this might prove to be an entrance to at least the dungeons of this castle "the deepest dungeon beneath the castle moat," which has in the past been denominated a "den of robbers," and may prove to be one key to unlock the secrets that lie buried in this place. (Mrs. M. D. Kemsley of Northey Lodge, Anstey, to whom thanks are due for her assistance in this article, says that in 1921 the gates were seen again when the moat was being cleaned but the springs were uncovered and before investigation could take place the water rose quickly and obscured them.)

In the parish of Anstey by the side of the high road which leads to Barkway and Cambridge, is an ancient chalk pit, one face of which has been so long disused that even in 1902 no one living could say when chalk had last been dug from it.

It was on the eastern face of the pit, hidden by earth and rubbish that tradition maintained the sometime entrance to a subterranean passage existed.

Mr. Andrews gained from Martin (1902) that in the fields in several places between Cave Gate and the Castle, not only did the corn fail to grow to the same state of perfection in the summer-time as the rest of the crops, but that in winter-time in the same spots the snow melted the quickest, and did not lie so long as on the other parts of the fields. Others also said there were certain parts of the fields which sounded more hollow than others, and that stones and earth have been heard to fall, as it were, into a hollow place below.

Around the turn of the century there lived at the little house at Cave Gate an old gentleman named Skinner, who took the greatest interest in antiquarian researches, and was only too delighted to probe the ground with a long thin iron pole in the hope of finding something. Prodding with his pole one day he felt the point going through into space, he had heard of the tale of the blind Anstey fiddler who had never returned after his bold entry into the legendary cave, and had found the long lost entrance, he cleared away the debris and with a lighted candle found there was a cave going in the direction of the Castle. The year was 1904, and this cave possibly of eighteenth century origin had probably been a chalk heading driven into the side of the hill to obtain chalk without removing the superincumbent earth. The direction in actual fact is slightly north of the line heading for Anstey Castle. (3)

Bibliography and references.

- (1) Kelly's Directory of Hertfordshire 1910 - Kelly's Directories Ltd. London W.C., p.23.
Olive Cook - The Sense of Continuity in a Hertfordshire Parish - A Study of Anstey (undated, c 1970) Commission on the Third London Airport Nuthamstead Preservation Association, p.13.
- (2) R. T. Andrews - Trans. East Herts. Arch. Soc. Vol: II 1902-1904 (Stephen Austin & Sons) Article, "Anstey Castle - Excavations on the site of Anstey Castle," pp. 114-118, Hertford 1903.
- (3) F. R. Williams - Anstey - a Hertfordshire Parish (W. Heffer & Sons Ltd.) Cambridge 1929, p.25 (158 p.)
W. R. Kemsley - Unpublished notes held by his widow Mrs. M. D. Kemsley.

The plans of Cave Gate and the legend of the blind fiddler George will appear in Bulletin No. 4.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY IN 1976

SATURDAY, 25TH SEPTEMBER, DAY CONFERENCE to be held at Lucy Cavendish College Cambridge, commencing 10.30 a.m.

SATURDAY, 23RD OCTOBER - CONFERENCE TO FORM NATIONAL FEDERATION to be held at The Institute of Archaeology, Gordon Square, London, W.C.1., 10.30 a.m.

CLASSIFICATION:

A Working Party of the Council for British Archaeology have produced a final draft to form a method of classifying all sites and structures for Great Britain.

For example, under DOMESTIC SITES the figure '5' has been allocated and will read as follows:-

- 5.1 Collective site
 - 5.1.1. City/colonia
 - 5.1.2. Town/municipium/burgh
 - 5.1.3. Village
 - 5.1.4. Vicus
 - 5.1.5. Settlement

 - 5.2. Single habitation
 - 5.2.1. House/hut
 - 5.2.2. Cave/rock shelter
 - 5.2.3. Cooking place/hearth
 - 5.2.5. Manor house (unfortified)/mansion/country house/villa
 - 5.2.6. Palace
 - 5.2.7. Wheelhouse/round house
 - 5.2.8. Souterrain/earth house/fogou
- ...

As Subterranea Britannica is working in close co-operation with the French and German societies it will also be prudent to use a classification system recognisable on the Continent. For the benefit of members the following information given out at last year's International Symposium held at Bergerac, France, has been translated by Alan Fleck:

"The Bergerac Association for the Study of Souterrains (ABES) has set as its main task the study of souterrains in the Perigord area. In order that collaboration between fellow members of the association should be as useful as possible, it has been decided to set up a formalised approach to the study.

What souterrain enthusiast has not, in fact, set up his own more or less methodical classification of the souterrains he knows? The number of such classifications must easily exceed 50.

This variety, which can be an advantage in that each person according to his own classification tends to highlight various aspects of souterrains, can produce difficulties when we are dealing with the exchange of large amounts of information about an area.

It is for this reason that ABES has decided on a systematic method of study common to all its members, each then being free to draw his own intuitive conclusions.

Our study-system of souterrains in Perigord is based upon two complementary analyses. The first consists of excavating scientifically, one by one, the most interesting souterrains and then deducing, by means of their contents and layouts, their history. It is then possible to extend knowledge gained from the study of one souterrain to a second, and so on. Our understanding of souterrains can therefore proceed by leaps, sometimes very quickly, thanks to an outstanding souterrain. This is the first approach to be applied, and it can give very good results if circumstances permit the study of archaeologically rich souterrains that are well-preserved, and if science and patience make excavation a practical approach.

If such souterrains are not available, nor comparable excavations, a second, more comparative analysis must be undertaken. This consists of three work-sheets, each with a detailed plan of the souterrain. These sheets are of course open to criticism, but have the advantage of being wide-ranging but not too detailed, and can be kept by the members of the ABES.

The first work-sheet, "A" for reconnaissance, is the basis of the rapid construction of a general inventory of the souterrains of a given area. In Perigord, thanks mainly to the efforts of Serge Avrilleau, we already possess a detailed inventory, which our study-sheets will enable us to refine and make more useful.

Each souterrain visited will be added to the inventory, thanks to the reconnaissance-sheet. It will thus quickly be possible to study souterrains according to type - those which possess ovoid pits, or pits, those vaulted with broken arches, or those in the same valley.... It is important to emphasise that these points are not inflexible, nor definitive; ovoid pits, for example, are found as often in cellars as in souterrains under mounds (motte). The contrast and comparison of topics can give birth to new and useful theories.

The survey becomes more accurate and rigorous with work-sheets "B" and "C". Sheet B, dealing with location, serves both as a comparative study in depth as well as a study of the individual souterrain in relation to its surroundings. But it is with work-sheet C, which deals with description, that the study becomes most meticulous and where the particular study of a souterrain most closely approaches the ideal of an excavation file.

Note that if these work-sheets seem over-detailed on perusal, their use in the field is quite straightforward, especially where sheets A and B are concerned. Indeed, only their use on a souterrain will reveal the method of the survey. (A copy of these work-sheets is available from the Secretary.)

There still remains the problem of terminology. We have adopted that of the SFES in its entirety, as much for the plans as for the vocabulary. We have had to keep in a certain number of new terms, which it would be advisable to discuss in the near future with our colleagues in the SFES before we adopt an international terminology. - M. GRAZIANI "

The Society will naturally work closely with the Council for British Archaeology and hopes to produce a nationally acceptable recording scheme for Great Britain. If anyone has any views on the subject, please write in to the Assistant Secretary, Mrs. Elaine Blatchford, 21 Briary Lane, Royston, Herts.

LETTER

We publish here extracts from an interesting letter from Mr. Godfrey Oxley-Sidey, who has recently been elected the Hon. Secretary of the Manx Antiquarian Society.

He informs us that the Isle of Man possesses so many underground relics of its archaeological past but it must be borne in mind of course, that Manx history is quite different from the rest of the British Isles, inasmuch as it was not conquered by the Romans, there was great continuity in its history, and in fact only came within British modern history in May, 1765, when the Revestment Act was passed through the British Parliament.

Christianity continued to flourish, from the traditional date of 447 A.D., and there is a wealth of evidence in the form of the keeills (chapels), their dedications, the numerous well preserved Celtic crosses and the ogham stones. Excavations have been made, and some are still in progress, by members of the Manx Antiquarian Society regarding the keeills, and there is a possibility that these stone-built chapels are on the foundations of older buildings made of wood.

The Island possesses many mining sites, for mineral extraction began here as early as 1246, when Harald Olafsson granted a charter to the monks of Furness Abbey. Lead, with a high silver content was the first metal exploited, but later - notably in the second half of the 19th century, large quantities of zinc were also produced. Some idea of what was extracted may be given from statistics for 1894, when 85,522 ounces of silver realised £39,000. Mining ended in 1929, but, though most shafts and workings have long been flooded, there is a possibility that some could be brought back into production, with world mineral prices at a record level. This has of course, already been done with the Cornish tin mines.

There remains one final type of subterranean working on Man, namely the wide variety of underground passages used by the "traders" (never smugglers), in the 18th century. Many are now closed off for the reasons of safety and security, but some still remain - though usually their exact location is regarded as local property. But they extended well away from the coast often commencing with a cave and ending under the town house of a wealthy merchant. While many were mere narrow secret passages, others were wide enough for animal pack trains to use them. The whole trade was very well organised, and it is perhaps significant that the locally built trading ships made long voyages, far beyond the Mediterranean, that in a local phrase, was regarded as being "a Manx lake". Records of some merchants included contracts not only with the British East India Company, but the much less well known Danish East India Company as well. Tea was one of the staples smuggled into Britain along its N.W. coastline, and the custom of marking some chests "China" was probably intentionally ambiguous.

I am not aware of any cave systems on the Island, but will made enquiries amongst fellow members of the Antiquarian Society. It is however, possible that some of the Bronze Age forts, of which there are several examples, might have been based originally on a convenient and secure cave. Incidentally some of these promontory forts were re-occupied by Norse families in the period of decline ending in 1266, when Magnus, the last Scandinavian King of Mann, accepted the overlordship of King Alexander II of Scotland. The Island possesses a number of long-barrows, some of complex design, and too there were ship burials of Norse type.

The Isle of Man has been fortunate in possessing its own archaeologists, perhaps the most famous of whom was Mr. P. M. C. Kermode. This has ensured that excavations have been under the control of qualified experts, that proper records have been kept and learned proceedings preserved. The Manx are very conscious of being a nation, distinct from the rest of Britain, and proud of a history that has left so many reminders. Thus Bishop's Court, the palace of the Lord Bishop of Sodor and Man, has been in continuous occupation for the past 700 years, while Castle Rushen, in the old capital of Castletown, has had a varied history from at least 1334 as royal residence, fortress, prison and latterly council offices. Under it there are dungeons, passages and evidence of a much older fort - possibly dating from 1090, when Godred Crovan built his stronghold.

DEFINITIONS

- CISTERNS:** Sometimes called 'rainbacks' are water storage pits underneath old houses or yards. A good British example comes from Harwich in Essex. (Eric S. Wood - Collins Field Guide to Archaeology in Britain, London 1963, p.191)
- GROTTOES:** A form of folly, or a very eccentric sort of pavilion. They are essentially artificial caves, sometimes real caves adapted, perhaps wholly or partly underground, and occasionally just buildings above ground. The grotto at Margate (18th century) has rooms and passages, and is encrusted with shells in decorative and symbolic designs; Goodwood has one built by the Duchess of Richmond and her daughters with their own hands in 1740, and adorned with shells. That at Fonthill (Beckford's house 1796-1807) had a paid hermit living in it, as did many others; some have baths included in them (Downton). Pope's grotto at Twickenham was used as a study. A large number still exist, of which other notable examples are at Liverpool (a private work-relief project of c. 1820), Welbeck (Notts.) Wanstead (Essex), Moor Park (Surrey), and West Wycombe (Bucks.) (Wood, op.cit. p. 212)
- PLAGUE PITS:** The great plague epidemics of the past produced the problem of hastily burying large numbers of people. This was mostly done by way of plague-pits, which are usually pieces of flat ground which have never been built over, such as that now Charterhouse Square, London (Black Death), and the triangle of grass opposite the Victoria and Albert Museum (1665). Mounds covering plague pits are exemplified at Twyford (Hants.) (Wood, op.cit. p. 234)
- ROCK BASINS:** ('bullauns' in Ireland) are oval or circular hollows in rock surfaces, of an average size of 12" (30.5 c.m.) to 18" (45.7 c.m.) across by 6" (1.83 m.). Some of these may be natural, but many appear to have been made or used as mortars for the crushing of grain, herbs, nuts etc. or stones; other uses have also been suggested. They seem to originate in at least the Roman period, and in the post-Roman in Ireland. They are common in Ireland (there are some 30 at Glendalough) and are found in Scotland (e.g. in Argyll) and Wales. (Wood, op.cit. p.241)
- SAW-PITS:** Heavy timber was sawn up, until the late 19th century, by means of saw-pits, in which a long saw was worked by a top-sawyer on a platform at the top, and a bottom-sawyer in the pit. These pits were not in the woods, but outside the local joiner's or wheelwright's or in the yards of large houses or estates (e.g. in the wheelwright's yard at Swallowfield, near Reading, Berks.) (Wood, op.cit. p. 242)
- SHAFT GRAVE:** A tomb in which the burials are made, often in a mortuary house at the bottom of a deep narrow pit. Shaft graves occur in various parts of the world and are not all of the same date. The most famous European examples are the richly furnished tombs at Mycenae (c.1600 - 1500 B.C.)

